Republic of Rwanda

Ministry of Education

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
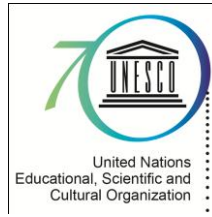Cultural Organization

African Union

Press Release

For immediate release

Education partners must revisit their priorities, strategies and targets for post 2015 – says Kigali Conference

The just concluded education conference that ended in the Rwandan capital, Kigali on Wednesday 11 February 2015 has called on all partners in education in Africa to to revisit their priorities, strategies and targets for post-2015 within a context of the new perspectives and emerging challenges. The conference participants endorsed that overarching goal of which is to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

In a final outcome document issued on Wednesday 11 February 2015, African ministers of education and other conference participants highlighted the uneven pace of progress in education across the continent and identified priority areas to be focused on after 2015. These included equitable and inclusive access to education for all, and the issues of inclusion, equity and gender equality. The participants stressed the need to have comprehensive teacher policies in African nations and called for 'concerted action to increase investments for the recruitment, training, deployment, management, evaluation and continued professional development and improved welfare of teachers across all levels of education, both formal and non-formal'.

The conference considered improvements in the teaching profession and teachers as vital for better educational quality and learning opportunities. Participants at the conference commended the AU Heads of States and Governments for the Malabo Summit Decision that called for a study on the training, living and working conditions for teachers in Africa. They invited policy makers, teacher organizations and education stakeholders to engage in ongoing and constructive social dialogue to improve teachers' working conditions, enhance mutual accountability and promote safe, peaceful and productive learning environments. Furthermore the conference participants called for innovation in teacher education and pedagogical practices that would include the use of new media and information and communication technologies (ICT).

The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development was brought to the fore and with it the conference resolved to support gender sensitive policies and planning; mainstream gender issues in teachers' training; stop violence against girls, unwanted pregnancies and early marriages; reduce sexual risk behaviour and HIV/AIDS through age-appropriate reproductive health education; address harmful cultural practices; ensure that girls stay in schools up to tertiary level, supported by, among others, feeding and

nutrition programmes; sanitation, health, accessible secondary schools and provision of scholarships; link women's literacy programs with women's rights, leadership, health, nutrition, peace and security, entrepreneurship skills etc.; ensuring gender sensitive learning environments.

The conference considered educational quality and learning outcomes as a matter of urgency and called for policies as well as strategies and legal frameworks to be put in place to provide resources, define standards, promote multilingualism and the use of African languages, appropriately monitor learning outcomes, and explore innovative approaches that would include the use of information and communication technologies. The conference also called for the strengthening of school leadership and governance that would involve communities while ensuring learning environments that are safe and free from violence, are inclusive and gender responsive.

Participants also called for the strengthening of science, technology and skills development for innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and employability, with greater attention given to youth, girls and marginalized groups. The conference also acknowledged the importance of indigenous knowledge systems, and pledged commitment to the promotion and inclusion of the development, use and dissemination of indigenous science in education systems. To this end, the conference participants called on all stakeholders in education in Africa to strengthen research, teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, at all levels of education, including in the formal, non-formal and informal sub-sectors' with dynamic linkages to the social, productive and service sectors'.

They also called for a holistic transformation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and higher education systems, with a focus on quality, and regional cooperation towards joint programmes, as well as the recognition and transfer of credits and the flexible entry and re-entry of students to the world of work and continuing education. The conference also called on for the development of mechanisms that would ensure quality assurance and benchmarking progress at national and regional levels, and ensuring that the labour market corresponds with skills acquired and strengthening labor market information systems (LMIS) linked to national human resource development plans.

Recognizing that the world is increasingly globalized and interconnected, and confronted by emerging human and environmental issues that create conditions and tensions which require greater cooperation and harmony between humankind and nature, the conference further acknowledged the importance of global citizenship education (GCED) in promoting the development of values, attitudes and skills that are necessary for a more peaceful, just, inclusive, and harmonious world. Participants called for the institutionalization of (Education for sustainable development) ESD-GCED through formal, non-formal and informal education by: a) promoting a humanistic approach to education (Ubuntu Spirit) that reinforces among others respect for self, others and the planet, b) involving all stakeholder in promoting the ESD-GCED agenda, c) using existing regional protocols and ongoing regional initiatives to promote the ESD-GCED agenda, d) reviewing and integrating ESD-GCED components in all subjects across all levels of education.

The conference noted that the high percentage of youth is potential asset for Africa's transformation. However, given the high adult and youth illiteracy levels, particularly of girls and women, and the huge numbers of out-of-school children and youth, the conference called on stakeholders to ensure that all youth and adults, especially women, have access to

continuous lifelong learning and functional literacy, numeracy and requisite skills for life and work if the youth dividend is to deliver on its promise. Further, it is imperative that governments and stakeholders institute more youth and adult literacy programmes which are attractive and relevant for the African context.

The conference noted that government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education. The conference recognized the limited financial investment in education, the weak governance and administrative structures of educational systems, and committed to strengthen financial governance and to increase domestic resource allocation and internal resource mobilization for education with specific targeting of under resourced sub-sectors including ECCE, Youth and Adult literacy, TVET and Higher Education, among others. Recommendations in this regard included adherence to the internationally recognized benchmarks of at least 6% of GDP or 2O% of public expenditure on education as well as the efficient use and equitable targeting of these resources.

The contribution of Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in meeting the financing gap was acknowledged by the conference and a call made to broaden the areas of support towards the achievement of the Post 2015 education targets. A further call was extended on development partners to recommit to increase, better target and coordinate official development assistance in alignment with regional and national education priorities and plans.

The conference expressed its commitment to promote the role of civil society organizations within a coalition of partners working on education in Africa. In this respect, participants endorsed the use of open and transparent governance systems and mechanisms for budget tracking, reporting and accountability for efficient use of resources.

This conference was a culmination of discussions that have been underway for the past two years on a new global goal and targets for the post-2015 education agenda and prepares ground for the World Education Forum in Incheon, the Republic of Korea, scheduled for May 2015 and at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2015.

Consultations already held have resulted in significant agreements that include the Muscat Agreement, the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly, the Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 Common African Position and the African Agenda 2063 and National Education for All (EFA) Reviews and Initiatives.

Conference participants called on UN agencies, development partners, Civil Society Organizations, youth representatives and the private sector under the leadership of UNESCO and the African Union to maintain the momentum to finalize a comprehensive, well-coordinated post-2015 Education Agenda and Framework for Action.

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